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nothing but experience. His own professional faults he will, of course, have; but I doubt if cant, the traditional vice of the moralist, will be foremost among them.*

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JAMES MARTINEAU AS AN ETHICAL TEACHER.

A DISTINGUISHED thinker, speaking of the position which may be rightly adopted by an adherent of the "Ethical Movement," has recently said: To share in the Ethical Movement, it is enough to recognize that the "good life" does not depend for its worth upon any metaphysical or theological doctrines; "it does not stand or fall with them, though they may stand or fall with it;" that "moral ideals and moral activity are justified by moral experience itself;" that "the essential evidence for the value of the 'good life' is found in actually living it and in no other way whatever."† If this is the principle for which the Ethical movement stands, then that movement never had a stronger adherent than Dr. Martineau; and it would be strange indeed if in this JOURNAL there were no recognition of the work of a man whom the civilized world with one voice has pronounced to be one of the most striking figures of the nineteenth

* I have purposely avoided saying anything, in the course of the preceding pages, on the question in dispute between Idealists and Realists. For my present purpose, it is, I conceive, indifferent whether the contents of our experiences be supposed to have some kind of existence outside the processes in which they are perceived, or not. What is important is that they come to us in the first place as parts of an experience "process-content," and that it is upon their character as such parts that any "realist" argument for their independent existence must be based. The only form of realism excluded by the foregoing argument is the belief in a "Thing-in-Itself" inaccessible throughout to human knowledge, a belief which is happily obsolescent among us. The conception of science as the full description of experiences in terms of nothing but experience seems quite consistent with any more sober "Realism" than this. My indebtedness to Avenarius and to Nietzsche will be readily perceived; and if I have hesitated to make formal acknowledgment of it earlier in my paper, it is only for fear that the very acknowledgment might look like an impertinence.

† G. F. Stout, in *Ethical World*, January 20, 1900.

century. It is with great pleasure, therefore, that I respond to the request to send some notes on Dr. Martineau's work as an Ethical teacher.

It is with Manchester New College (now Manchester College, Oxford,) that Dr. Martineau's name as writer and teacher is specially connected: a college which has always adhered to the principle of "freely imparting theological knowledge without insisting on the adoption of particular theological doctrines." He entered its class-rooms as a student in 1822, and in 1839, on becoming its Secretary, commenced a career of service to his Alma Mater as devoted as it was brilliant. In 1840 he entered on the duties of Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy, adding, in 1857, Religious Philosophy to the subjects of his chair. In 1869 he became Principal, and from this office did not retire until 1885. It may seem to have been a narrow sphere within which to exercise such splendid gifts; but the spiritual freedom which was afforded to him was a priceless treasure to such a mind, "for it was not his task to expound some stale and borrowed notions, but to enter the sanctuary of Truth and listen for himself to the Divine oracles, and then reproduce those which he was permitted to hear in a form not unworthy of their august authority."

In this connection the following reminiscence, from the pen of a former student, afterwards a colleague, of Dr. Martineau, will be of interest:—

"The freedom which Dr. Martineau welcomed for himself he accorded in full measure to his pupils. No man knew better that we may err in giving intellectual form to our imperfect vision of the infinite God, and that our descendants may climb to heights which our feet have never trodden; and accordingly he never repressed by the weight of his authority the immature thought of the learner, but rather stimulated him to greater exertion, and taught him to love truth above all earthly gains, and to toil, though it should be with weary and lonely steps, towards that resplendent summit where she reveals herself transfigured in the cloudless light of heaven. For this mental freedom, which he maintained as a sacred trust, was not founded on scepticism, or on the peevishness of a restless mind, always learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth, but on faith—faith that spiritual truth always transcends our intellectual apprehension of it, and discloses new and deeper meanings to him who casts off the sloth of habit, and lifts his own longing and prayerful eyes to behold her beauty. For the humble soul he profoundly believed

that there was still an open vision of the Highest; and he felt that only that truth is vital to us which we have clasped to our hearts, and recognized as a kindling power in our own experience. It was not his aim, therefore, to awaken incessant doubt, but to aid his students in forming strong and manly convictions founded on their own personal thought, and on the witness of their own spirits, and to help them on their way by leading them to the sources of the necessary knowledge, and by enriching the partiality of their opinions by large and catholic judgments.

"We will for a moment survey him at his post of teacher, and we will stray into his lecture-room at a time when he had the widest reputation, and men of various denominations in philosophy and religion acknowledged their indebtedness to him in the spiritual conflicts of our day. We enter, and find seated at the head of a table, addressing some half-dozen youths, this venerable man, whose look and bearing, however, do not betoken his four-score years, and whose commanding face, once seen, cannot be forgotten; and, as we listen, we hear searching criticisms, profound and suggestive thoughts, and comprehensive philosophical reflections, conveyed in language at once of exquisite precision and finished beauty, and uttered with a play of expression and a musical sincerity of intonation, which rivet the attention, and delight the ear and warm the imagination, while putting the intellectual powers on the strain. Here is no slovenly work, no discontent with the smallness of the field which he has to fill, but the best that is in him is poured forth as if he had prepared

What particularly struck many of the students who attended Dr. Martineau's classes, was his great admiration and love for Plato; and the happy combination in his lectures of high thought with exceeding beauty of expression was in no small measure due to the circumstance that he, consciously or unconsciously, made the great Greek philosopher his model.

Nothing was more characteristic of him, as of his master, than his constant openness to new light. Many writers have quoted and applied to Dr. Martineau himself a saying of his own, which, originally used in an ethical reference, is fully as true in an intellectual: "There is no life but in perpetual growth." There is no severer criticism to be passed on any thinker's work, than that he makes for himself a beaten track from which he cannot diverge,—that he seems tied to the use of certain formulæ, and cannot appreciate or even understand any philosophical principles which have received an expression less rigid and more free than his own. But though Dr. Martineau held firmly to his fundamental convictions, the forms in which he cast them were never rigidly stereotyped; and the

student who reads Dr. Martineau's works with mind open and free from prejudice, will find that this was a man whose thought well exemplified his own definition of life.

Dr. Martineau thus describes the way in which he arrived at the ethical point of view which characterizes his thought:—

"When I first woke up, before and during my college life, to the interest of moral and metaphysical speculations, I carried into them, from previous training for the profession of civil engineer, a store of exclusively scientific conceptions, rendered familiar in the elementary study of mathematics, mechanics and chemistry. Small as it was, it was my all, and necessarily dictated the only rules of judgment which I could apply. I had nothing to take with me into logical and ethical problems but the maxims and postulates of physical knowledge. . . Steeped in the empirical and necessarian mode of thought, I served out successive terms of willing captivity to Locke and Hartley, to Collins, Edwards, and Priestley, to Bentham and James Mill; and though at times I was driven to disaffection by the dogmatism and acrid humors of the last two of these philosophers, my allegiance was restored and lengthened by literary and personal relations with the younger Mill." But the irresistible pleading of the moral consciousness compelled him to recognize that the postulates of physical science are inadequate to moral experience; and to insist on finding a real meaning in such terms as "responsibility," "guilt," "merit," "duty." He was forced to concede to the self-conscious mind itself, both as knowing and as willing, an autonomous function distinct from each and all the phenomena known and changes willed—a self-identity, unlike any growing aggregate of miscellaneous and dissimilar experiences. Subsequently, during a period of study in Germany under the guidance of Trendelenburg, Martineau went through what he himself describes as "a new intellectual birth": "I came into the same plight, in respect of the cognitive and æsthetic side of life, that had already befallen me with regard to the moral." I will endeavor to state in few words the essential features of the philosophical standpoint at which Martineau thus arrived.

Everyone, who endeavors to systematize his thoughts about

the meaning of the world, will find that consciously or unconsciously he has been using as tools of explanation certain intellectual principles, which it has become the custom to call "categories." The character of a *Weltanschauung* depends on the range and depth of the categories employed. For a positivism like that of Mill, the only admissible categories are the like and the unlike, the simultaneous and successive; to discern the connection (if such it can be called) of events in these ways, is to "explain" them; and these categories can be applied without taking us beyond the region of "phenomena." Dr. Martineau, on the other hand, takes as his one supreme metaphysical category the principle of Causation. It is an "axiom,"—a principle which our thought naturally uses as it develops, but which derives its meaning from our self-conscious experience of personal (not merely corporeal) Activity; in a word, from Will. Now Will, so understood, is not even a mental *phenomenon,* as the "scientific" psychologist understands this term; still less is it a material phenomenon. Hence the principle of Causation, as a tool of explanation, means that every phenomenon depends upon that which is other than phenomenon, and is conscious, rational Will. Some phenomena we know to be immediately dependent upon our own wills; hence phenomena in general are rightly referred to a Divine Will. A consequence of this view is, that causation as dealt with in the physical sciences, *i. e.,* causation as a relation between one phenomenon and another, is causation improperly so called, or imperfectly understood. Dr. Martineau has worked out this theory in different forms, his most elaborate and matured presentation of it being in the "Study of Religion;" and it scarcely needs to be said that these discussions abound in brilliant, convincing and suggestive reasoning. Yet the general view is open to objections which have never, I think, been adequately dealt with. From the point of view of ordinary psychological reflection, there does not seem to be much resemblance between the human and a creative will. There is no doubt, whatever my theory of causation may be, that if I will to move my arm, my arm moves. But I might will all day to move anything beyond the reach of my arm, and no movement would take place. From the point of

view of Epistemology, there are reasons pointing to the conclusion that the category of Causation must necessarily break down under the strain which Dr. Martineau puts upon it. If the Absolute is causal, it is infinitely more; and if *merely* causal, it ceases to be the Absolute.

In Dr. Martineau's Ethical theory there is an important ambiguity arising out of the ways in which such terms as "impulses," "springs of action," "motive," are used. Dr. Martineau sometimes seems to speak of "springs of action" as if they could, when ethically considered, be abstracted from their objects, and could be compared with each other in this abstract form. But his discussions also suggest a theory of conscience which is not far removed from that of T. H. Green. I may perhaps be permitted to quote a passage in which this view of Dr. Martineau's ethical teaching is summed up:

"We retain what is deepest and truest in his system; we accept his doctrine that our 'springs of action,' understood as consciously purposive desires—cannot be divided into two classes, the absolutely right and the absolutely wrong, but arrange themselves in a scale of moral worth and have various degrees therein; we recognize gratefully his insistence on the truth that every one of our 'natural tendencies' is ethically justified *in its proper place,* and his brief but profound interpretation of moral progress as the gradual organization of such tendencies, high and low, and of our reflection upon them, into 'social consensus and religion.' We say with Dr. Martineau, that *'any* knowledge with ourselves, large or small, which we may have of the superior right of one spring of action over another comes under the head of *conscience,'* and that this is the true form of the moral judgment; but this judgment of the relative worth of our desires is not based merely on a special kind of feeling which arises when two of them meet, it is based on a comparison of their objects with what *for the time being* is taken as the supreme Ideal of life as a whole. In view of such an Ideal their organization takes place, as the historical evolution of morality proceeds."—["Studies in Philosophical Criticism and Construction," pp. 358-9.

There are in fact two lines of thought in Dr. Martineau's

ethical teaching. One of these leads to individualism and ethical Deism: "God's part is done when having made us free he shows to us our best; ours now remains to pass from illumination of conscience to surrender of will."* This mode of thought exaggerates the power of the individual will, and ignores the physiological and sociological truths involved in the ancient dogmas of Original Sin and the incapacity of the isolated individual,—truths concerning the effects of inheritance and environment on character. But Dr. Martineau also works out a deeper view when he recognizes the vast importance of social life for the development of ethical and religious insight,—not "social life" merely as the organized institutions of Society, but Society as a common life of thought and feeling animating its members, and affording them insight into one another's real being. "The social union," says Dr. Martineau, "is a concrete though spiritual form of life, penetrating and partly constituting all persons belonging to it; so that only as fractions of it do they become human integers themselves."† Hence we must be well grounded in Humanity before we can study Divinity to any good purpose.

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* "Seat of Authority in Religion," p. 106.

† "Types of Ethical Theory, II., p. 403.